

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
BUREAU OF EARLY INTERVENTION

**Notification to the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities  
(OPWDD) of a Child's Potential Eligibility for Services**

**Tool Kit for Service Coordinators**

**Revised May 2022**

**Background**

As of January 1, 2013, following an amendment to Public Health Law, Section 2544(2)(c), service coordinators are required to notify the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) if, in consultation with the evaluator, it is determined that a child is potentially eligible for OPWDD services.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this Tool Kit is to assist early intervention initial service coordinators in completing the tasks needed to make a notification to the OPWDD Front Door Regional Office, as required in Early Intervention Program (EIP) regulations at 10 NYCRR Section 69-4.7(m). The regulation states *"If, in consultation with the evaluator, the service coordinator identifies a child that is potentially eligible for programs or services offered by or under the auspices of the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), the service coordinator shall, with parental consent, notify OPWDD's regional office of the potential eligibility of such child for said programs or services."*

Children who are eligible for the EIP may also demonstrate the need for additional services offered through programs outside of the EIP, such as those offered through OPWDD. If a parent is interested in the supports that may be available through OPWDD, the initial service coordinator should assist the parent to contact the OPWDD local Front Door Regional Office and ask to speak to the intake coordinator who can answer any questions and assist the family to request an OPWDD eligibility determination for their child.

Contacts that an initial service coordinator has with an evaluator(s), whether in-person or by phone, to carry out this responsibility, are considered billable service coordination activities. This Tool Kit provides service coordinators with the step-by-step process for notifying the OPWDD Front Door Regional Office when the team believes that a child is potentially eligible for services through OPWDD.

**Please be advised that this notification does not serve as a referral to OPWDD.**

Tool Kit Items:

1. Reference Guide for Early Intervention Service Coordinators - Notification to the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) of a Child's Potential Eligibility for OPWDD Services..... 3-4
  
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**Reference Guide for Early Intervention Service Coordinators**  
Notification to the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) of a  
Child's Potential Eligibility for OPWDD Services

**How to Tell if a Child may be Potentially Eligible for OPWDD Services:**

- The child demonstrates functional limitations in the areas of physical development (including fine and gross motor, vision, hearing, oral motor, feeding and swallowing disorders), adaptive skills development, cognitive development, communicative functions, and/or social-emotional function which are assessed and meet the following standards as a general guide:
  - ▶ 12-month delay in one or more functional areas OR
  - ▶ 33% delay in one functional area OR
  - ▶ 25% delay in each of two functional areas
- Standardized instruments scores will generally reflect:
  - ▶ 2 Standard Deviations (SDs) below the mean in 1 functional area, OR
  - ▶ 1.5 SDs below the mean in each of 2 functional areas
- Additionally, the EI initial service coordinator, with parental consent, consults with the multidisciplinary or supplemental evaluator by phone or in person, to identify a child in the EIP who may have significant developmental needs and who may be potentially eligible for OPWDD services. This discussion includes the level of the child's needs identified by the evaluator, and any diagnosis(es) identified by the evaluator or the physician. Consider the information provided by OPWDD (included in the Tool Kit).

For additional information on OPWDD eligibility, please refer to OPWDD's [website](#).

**Steps for the Early Intervention Service Coordinator to Submit Notification to OPWDD:**

1. The early intervention (EI) initial service coordinator (SC) should educate the parent(s)/guardian(s) about each of the programs for which the child may be potentially eligible, including information on services available through OPWDD and other support programs.
2. Ensure that the parent(s)/guardian(s) understand what services are available. Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the notification to OPWDD is **not** a referral for an eligibility determination.
3. Obtain written parental consent if notification will be made to OPWDD (Tool Kit Item 4), by completing the form **Notification of Potential Eligibility to OPWDD**, which should be sent by secure email to: [EIP.OPWDD.Notification@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:EIP.OPWDD.Notification@opwdd.ny.gov)
4. Suggest that parent(s)/guardian(s) contact their local [OPWDD Front Door Regional Office](#) if they have questions regarding potential OPWDD eligibility or services. (See Tool Kit Item 2 for contact information).

**If, after the notification of potential eligibility is made to OPWDD, a parent chooses to pursue services through OPWDD or other programs:**

1. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) are interested in pursuing services through OPWDD, advise them to contact the local OPWDD Front Door Regional Office to make the referral. The early intervention (EI) service coordinator (SC) should offer to assist the parent(s)/guardian(s) in completing needed steps to make a referral to pursue an OPWDD eligibility determination.
2. The EI SC will work with OPWDD Front Door Regional Office staff to identify the documentation, evaluations, and assessments required for an eligibility determination.
3. After this, the SC obtains written parental consent to exchange information with OPWDD, including, but not limited to any procedures for referral, needed assessments, and any other information, which a parent wants shared.
4. The SC assists the parent(s)/guardian(s) to submit the required paperwork and/or documentation for an OPWDD eligibility determination, if assistance is needed.

**If a Child Participating in the Early Intervention Program is Found OPWDD Eligible:**

1. Service coordination through EI will continue for children found OPWDD eligible who are also determined by OPWDD to be eligible to enroll in OPWDD's Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver.
2. To receive OPWDD HCBS Waiver services, the OPWDD Front Door Regional Office will authorize the child's enrollment into Non-Medicaid Care Management (NMCM) with the Care Coordination Organization (CCO) of the parent(s)/guardian(s) choice. *(The CCO Care Manager must meet with the child and their parent(s)/guardian(s) at least twice within a twelve (12) month period to review and/or update the child's Life Plan).*
3. Communicate with the OPWDD Front Door Regional Office liaison and the child's CCO Care Manager about the child's EI services.
4. Work with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the child's CCO Care Manager to identify the child's needs and coordinate services between EI and OPWDD.

**OPWDD Front Door Regional Offices**

**Capital/Taconic Region:** 518-388-0398

Counties served: Albany, Columbia, Dutchess, Fulton, Greene, Montgomery, Putnam, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Ulster, Warren, Washington

**Hudson Valley:**

845-947-6390

Counties served: Orange, Rockland, Sullivan, Westchester

**Central New York, Southern Tier and North Country**

**Southern Tier:** 607-240-4900

Counties served: Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego, Tioga, Tompkins

**Central NY:** 607-240-4900

Counties served: Cayuga, Cortland, Herkimer, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego

**North Country:** 607-240-4900

Counties served: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, St. Lawrence

**Long Island:** 631-434-6000

Counties served: Nassau, Suffolk

**New York City**

**Queens:** 718-217-6485

**Brooklyn:** 718-642-8576

**Manhattan:** 646-766-3220

**Bronx:** 718-430-0757

**Staten Island:** 718-982-1913

**Finger Lakes and Western NY**

**Finger Lakes:** 855-679-3335

Counties served: Chemung, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates

**Western NY:** 800-487-6310

Counties served: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans

## Services for Children: Ages Birth to Three Years

Dear Parent,

The early years of a child's life are an important time of rapid development. Some children need specialized supports to achieve their potential. The Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) is collaborating with the Department of Health's Bureau of Early Intervention (DOH BEI) to help children and families who face special challenges during this time.

The New York State Department of Health Early Intervention Program (EIP) offers a variety of therapeutic and support services to eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, including:

- Family education and counseling, home visits, and parent support groups
- Special instruction
- Speech-language pathology and audiology
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Psychological services
- Service coordination
- Nursing services
- Nutrition services
- Social work services
- Vision services
- Assistive technology devices and services
- Transportation

For more information on the EIP, visit the DOH BEI website at:

[http://www.health.ny.gov/community/infants\\_children/early\\_intervention/](http://www.health.ny.gov/community/infants_children/early_intervention/)

A parent guide titled, ***Early Intervention Steps: A Parent's Basic Guide to the Early Intervention Program***, provides information on the EIP from referral through the time a child exits the Program. This guide is available at the following link:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/0532/>

While there are many beneficial services available through the EIP, there are other supports through OPWDD's Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver, which may also assist young children with developmental disabilities and their families, including:

- **Respite:** Short-term relief for a child's primary caregivers provided in the home or other approved site.
- **Family Education and Training:** Education and training to enhance the knowledge, skills, and decision-making capacity for caregivers of a child with a developmental disability.

- **Environmental Modifications:** Adaptations to the home that are necessary to increase or maintain a child's ability to live at home with independence.

A child must meet OPWDD eligibility criteria to receive services through OPWDD. For young children below seven years of age, functional limitations in the areas of motor development, adaptive skills development, cognitive development, communicative functions, and/or social function are assessed to determine provisional eligibility. For more information on OPWDD's eligibility determination process, please visit: <https://opwdd.ny.gov/get-started>

If you think your child has a developmental disability and you are interested in supports that may be available through OPWDD, please contact your OPWDD Front Door Regional Office and ask to speak with an intake coordinator. They can answer your questions, work with you to understand your family's needs, and if you are interested, help you request an OPWDD eligibility determination for your child.

Your EI service coordinator can assist you by providing you with the contact information for the OPWDD Front Door Regional Office in your area.



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**NOTIFICATION TO THE OFFICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES (OPWDD)**

**Questions and Answers**

**1. Does the notification of a child’s potential eligibility for services to OPWDD need parental consent in writing?**

**Answer:** Yes, written parental consent is required to make the notification to OPWDD of a child’s potential eligibility for programs and services under OPWDD.

**2. Will Early Intervention (EI) service coordinators need to create a consent form?**

**Answer:** A form specific to OPWDD notification has been developed by the State Department of Health (Department) Bureau of Early Intervention. This form is included in this Tool Kit (Item 4) and includes a section for parental consent to notify OPWDD.

**3. Is the notification to OPWDD the same as a referral?**

**Answer:** No, the notification to OPWDD described in the amended Public Health Law is not a referral. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) is interested in obtaining supports and services available through OPWDD, the parent should contact their OPWDD Front Door Regional Office to make a referral and the EI service coordinator, if needed, can assist the parent(s)/guardian(s) with contacting the OPWDD Front Door Regional Office in their region to speak with staff who can answer questions and assist with the family’s request for an OPWDD eligibility determination for their child.

**4. Would the multidisciplinary evaluation (MDE) team include notification to OPWDD in the evaluation recommendations or MDE summary?**

**Answer:** The multidisciplinary evaluation (MDE) team is responsible for making recommendations about resources or services that may be beneficial to the child and family. If the evaluation team believes that notification to OPWDD or other programs or services is appropriate, they should discuss this information with the EI initial service coordinator and include this information in the evaluation report and summary.

**5. Children typically don't have a diagnosis before three years old; will it be difficult to determine that they are eligible for OPWDD services?**

**Answer:** Only OPWDD can determine whether or not the child is eligible for their services. The multidisciplinary evaluation (MDE) team is responsible for making recommendations about resources or services that may be beneficial to the child and family. If the evaluation team believes that notification to OPWDD is appropriate, they should discuss this information with the initial service coordinator and could include this information in the evaluation report and summary. Early Intervention service coordinators are responsible for having discussions with the family to determine a need to make a notification to OPWDD if the child has significant developmental needs based on the MDE team recommendations. The service coordinator and parent can discuss a notification of potential eligibility to OPWDD and then, if the parent provides written consent, the service coordinator will make this notification.

**6. What happens if parent(s)/guardian(s) refuse to sign consent for notification to OPWDD initially when speaking with their evaluation team and initial service coordinator, but their ongoing service coordinator thinks they might benefit? Does this responsibility move to the ongoing service coordinator? How is this documented?**

**Answer:** Documentation of the parent(s)/guardian(s) declination to sign consent for notification should be maintained. Notification cannot be made without written parental consent. The ongoing service coordinator is responsible to continuously seek the appropriate services and supports necessary to benefit the development of the child for the duration of the child's eligibility. Therefore, services available through OPWDD can continue to be discussed with the parent by the ongoing service coordinator. It is the responsibility of the service coordinator to document any discussions with the family, including discussions about notification of potential eligibility for OPWDD and to include information about the parent(s)/guardian(s) decision to consent to the notification or decline the offer to make a notification at that time.

**7. Does the notification to OPWDD only happen at the time of the initial multidisciplinary evaluation or can it happen at any other time in the child's course of services in the EIP? Who is then responsible to make this referral?**

**Answer:** It is the specific responsibility of the initial service coordinator to consult with the evaluators regarding notification of potential eligibility to OPWDD and to make this notification if appropriate. If at any time after the child's initial individualized family service plan (IFSP) meeting and during the child's time in the EIP, a decision is made by the parent/guardian to refer their child to OPWDD for a determination of eligibility for programs and services available through OPWDD, it is the responsibility of the child's ongoing service coordinator to assist the parent(s)/guardian(s) with this process, as part of their role to continuously seek appropriate services and supports to benefit the development of the child for the duration of the child's eligibility in the EIP.

**8. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) wants to be referred to OPWDD and becomes enrolled in the OPWDD Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver while in the EIP, will the OPWDD Care Coordination Organization (CCO) Care Manager become an EIP service coordinator to manage the EIP portion of the child's case, as well as OPWDD services?**

**Answer:** Children with developmental disabilities enrolled in the EIP may also be enrolled in OPWDD's HCBS Waiver and receive, for example: Respite, Family Education and Training, and/or Environmental Modifications. If an EI eligible child is enrolled in the HCBS waiver, the EIP is responsible for providing service coordination for the EIP services and bills Medicaid. Children participating in the EI Program receive an individualized family service plan (IFSP) for their EI services, and they must also have a Life Plan if they are receiving an HCBS Waiver Service at the same time. The child must be enrolled in the EI option of OPWDD Non-Medicaid Care Management (NMCM) with a CCO for the management of their Life Plan, which is required to support HCBS waiver services. A CCO may only bill a maximum of twice within a 12-month period. The Care Manager must document and conduct a face-to-face meeting and review (which may include the creation of the initial Life Plan) and/or update of the Life Plan. At least one Life Plan meeting must include all Developmental Disability Service Providers as necessary or agreed upon. Only one program may bill Medicaid for case management services at a time. Because OPWDD NMCM services are not billed to Medicaid, they can co-exist with EI service coordination services that are billed to the Medicaid Program when the child is Medicaid eligible. More information can be found in the [CCO Policy Manual](#).

**9. Are the eligibility criteria for OPWDD services the same as the criteria for the EIP?**

**Answer:** No. Program eligibility criteria are different for the EIP and for OPWDD. Notification to OPWDD should be discussed with the EIP multidisciplinary evaluator and parent when a child has a significant delay in intellectual functioning or adaptive behavior, or a diagnosed condition that has the potential for lifelong disability. Only OPWDD can determine whether or not the child is eligible for their services.

**10. Should notification to OPWDD be made for all children in the EIP?**

**Answer:** The decision to make a notification to OPWDD of a child's potential eligibility for services under OPWDD is individualized and should be based upon the child's evaluation results, as well as on the service coordinator's discussion with the family of the potential benefits of pursuing services and supports offered under OPWDD. Part of a service coordinator's responsibility in the EIP is to provide information to families about programs and services which may benefit children and families. If the child has a significant delay and the family has the potential to benefit from services, then notification of potential eligibility should be made, with written parental consent. Should a parent want to pursue a referral to OPWDD, they should contact their OPWDD Front Door Regional office to make the referral and the EI service coordinator should assist the parent as needed.